
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

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Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION MEETING

October Meeting. The Natural Resource Commission (NRC) met on October 12, 2017, in Des Moines. The following items were discussed.

Northeast Iowa Forestry Speakers. Representatives from the Northeast Iowa Forest Advisory Committee presented their concerns to the Commission about the elimination of the Forestry Bureau, which occurred when the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reorganized in July 2015 due to substantial budget cuts. Concerns included:

- There will be fewer federal grants written for forestry as there is no Bureau Chief to coordinate this function.
- The State of Iowa has no forest identity without a Forestry Bureau. Other states have a Forestry Division or some type of organization. In addition, there is no Bureau Chief to represent forestry concerns when the DNR is making policy decisions.
- There are concerns that current forestry staff will assume other duties in the Wildlife Bureau, and less time will be devoted to forestry.
- There was no notification to stakeholders that the Forestry Bureau was being eliminated.

Responses were given to these concerns by Director Chuck Gipp and Deputy Director Bruce Trautman. The DNR agreed to the establishment of a Forestry Advisory Workgroup.

City Park Grants. Allocations for city parks are made from the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Fund as directed in Iowa Code section [455A.19](#). Grants to cities are used to fund natural areas that encourage outdoor activities and recreation. The Commission approved funding for 19 projects. The following table summarizes the dollar amount requested, the dollar amount awarded, the number of projects submitted and scored, and the number of projects approved.

Resource Enhancement and Protection Fund City Parks Grants

| <u>Category</u> | <u>Amount Requested</u> | <u>Amount Recommended</u> | <u>Projects Scored</u> | <u>Projects Awarded</u> |
|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Small Cities | \$1,619,836 | \$ 447,817 | 27 | 7 |
| Medium Cities | \$2,724,681 | \$ 626,250 | 32 | 7 |
| Large Cities | \$3,139,414 | \$ 899,038 | 18 | 5 |
| Total | <u>\$7,483,931</u> | <u>\$ 1,973,105</u> | <u>77</u> | <u>19</u> |

A small city has a population that is less than 2,000, a medium city has a population between 2,000 and 25,000, and a large city has a population greater than 25,000.

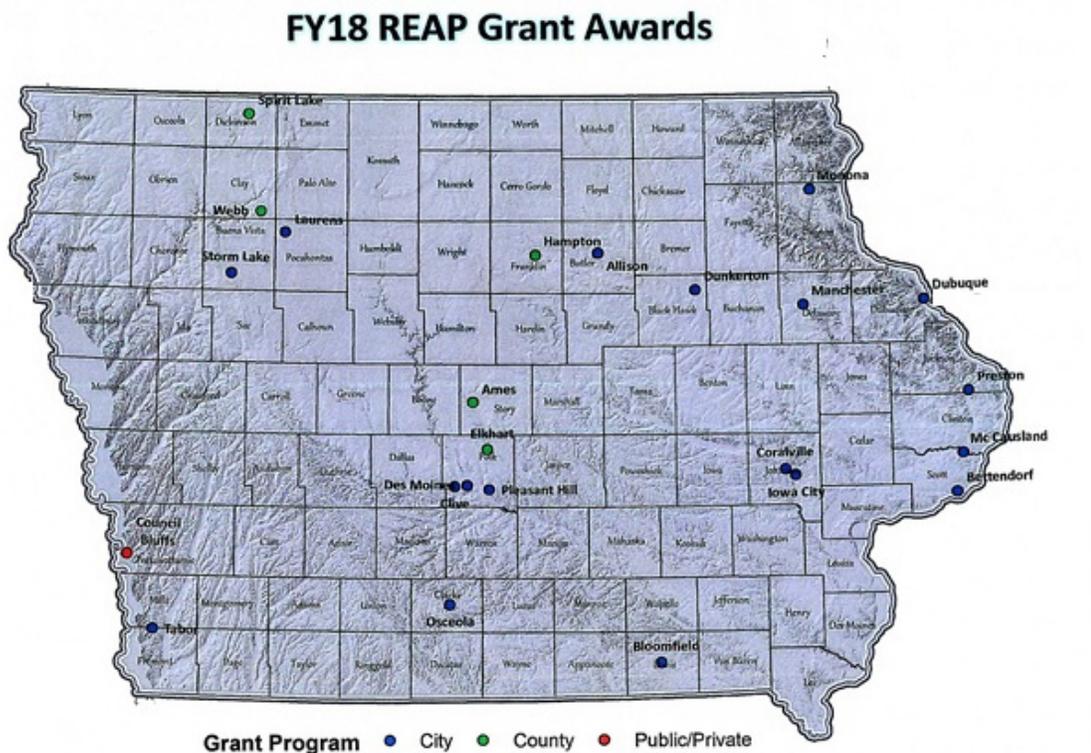
County Grants. The REAP Fund also provides funding for county grants, with the objective of increasing outdoor activities and recreation. The Commission approved five grants, and the following table summarizes the dollar amount requested, the dollar amount awarded, the number of projects submitted and scored, and the number of projects approved.

Resource Enhancement and Protection Fund County Grants

| <u>Category</u> | <u>Amount Requested</u> | <u>Amount Recommended</u> | <u>Projects Scored</u> | <u>Projects Awarded</u> |
|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Total | \$2,948,309 | \$ 961,298 | 11 | 5 |

Private/Public Cost Share. Another allocation made from the Open Spaces Account in the REAP Fund provides cost-share funding to an organization that will provide private funding for the project. The Commission approved \$336,000 to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation to acquire 506 acres of land in the Loess Hills, located in Mills County. The land will be used to develop a Loess Hills conservation complex and will expand the habitat of the Folsom Point Preserve.

Map. Below is a map from the DNR that details the location of the REAP grants awarded.



Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Public Land Acquisition. The Commission approved the following:

- A total of 71 acres near Volga in Clayton County for a purchase price of \$348,000. This land is adjacent to the Volga Wildlife Management Area.

- A total of 160 acres in Wright County adjacent to the Big Wall Lake Wildlife Management Area. The purchase price is \$170,000.
- A total of 40.5 acres in Fayette County for a purchase price of \$166,000. The land is adjacent to the Gilbertson Wildlife Management Area.
- A total of 184 acres in Palo Alto County for a purchase price of \$920,000. The land is adjacent to the Silver Lake Wildlife Management Area.
- A total of 35 acres in Fremont County for a purchase price of \$35,000. The land is adjacent to the Militia Hollow Wildlife Management Area.
- A donation of one half acre of land in Tama County that is located in Union Grove State Park.

Jasper County Contract. The Commission approved a contract with the Jasper County Conservation Board not to exceed \$1.2 million for the restoration of Mariposa Lake. The project will include lake dredging, removal and reconstruction of the lake's outlet structure, restoring native species on the northeast tributary, improving fish habitat, and improving angler access with boat ramps, additional parking, and fishing jetties.

Next Meeting. The next meeting will be held on November 9, 2017, in Des Moines. For additional information, refer to NRC information on the Department of Natural Resources [website](#).

STAFF CONTACT: Debra F. Kozel (515.281.6767) deb.kozel@legis.iowa.gov